

***DRAFT LETTER***  
***To be voted on during the 12/15/21 Library Board Meeting***

December 15, 2021

To: Mayor Ortega and Scottsdale City Council

From: Shiela Reyman, Chairperson, Scottsdale Public Library Board

Re: Funding Issues Facing the Scottsdale Public Library System

We, as the sitting Library Board, unanimously voted on November 17, 2021 to draft a letter to send to City Council regarding the negative funding issues facing the Scottsdale Public Library system.

(If the Library Board votes to approve the sending of this letter, at the meeting on 12/15/21, I will amend the previous sentence as follows: **We, as the sitting Library Board, (vote total) on December 15, 2021, to send this letter to City Council regarding the negative funding issues facing the Scottsdale Public Library system.**)

The Scottsdale Public Library Board has been appointed by the Mayor and City Council and charged with various responsibilities. One of the most important is defined in Scottsdale Code of Ordinances, Chapter 20, Article 1, Section 20-17 (c), which states in part; “The library board shall advise the city manager through the city council on general policy relating to the operation of the library.”

Each month, during our scheduled meetings, the Library Board Members are kept informed by the Scottsdale Public Library (SPL) staff about the budget, staffing, policies, events, projects and the status of each of our four current SPL Branches. One issue that has greatly impacted the SPL is the budget, specifically in two areas; the deduction of the estimated amount that becoming a Late-Fine Free Library System would “cost” and the significant reduction in the Materials Collection Budget.

**Item 1: Late-Fine Free Budget Deduction**

The members of the 2019 Library Board spent two years and held several meetings before sending a letter to the City Council, dated January 10, 2020, with our recommendation that Scottsdale Public Library become a Late-Fine Free Library System. (See attached copy of that letter) The recommendation included the request that this step should be taken without an adverse impact to the Library’s operating budget. The City Council agreed with the recommendation and on April 7, 2020 signed Resolution No. 11745.

City of Scottsdale, Resolution No. 11745, Section 1, states “The City Council hereby approves the elimination of the following Scottsdale Public Library fines from the 2019 Community Services Fines and Fees Schedule and future schedules: New and High Demand Materials Overdue, All Other Material Overdue, and Maximum Overdue Fines, without adversely impacting the Library’s operating Budget.”

Resolution No. 11745, Section 3, states that it would become effective as of July 1, 2020.

The Library Board is sending this letter to advise you of the negative reduction to the SPL Budget. Neither the FY 20/21 nor the FY 21/22 Budgets received the funding that should have been included according to Resolution No. 11745. We recommend that the City Council look at whether Resolution No. 11745 can be enforced and the SPL Budget receive the additional funding. The hope is that the funds could be received during the current FY 21/22 to help with the costs of fully reopening during the third quarter of FY 21/22. The annual deduction of \$150,000 is the estimated “cost” of having a Late-Fine Free Library System.

## **Item 2: Materials Collection Budget Reduction**

A significant reduction to the Materials Collection Budget is a real concern as well. Each of the two previous Fiscal Year (FY) budgets has been reduced by 54.5%. The breakdown is \$600,000 in FY 20/21 and \$550,000 in FY 21/22. The FY 21/22 reduced amount of \$50,000 is due to the closure of the Palomino Branch.

The bulk of the FY 20/21 reduction was due to direction from City Council to reduce overall City spending due to the COVID-19 pandemic. The SPL has made efforts to work within the severely reduced budget by drastically limiting branch hours, staff and materials. When the SPL system is restored to near pre-pandemic levels in the third quarter of FY 21/22 the budget will need to be restored as well.

The SPL staff is in the final stages of submitting the FY 22/23 Decision Package and they are requesting that the Materials Budget be restored. The Library Board members are hoping for the support of the entire City Council.

The Library Board members would be willing to speak with any of you about these very important funding issues. Further, we request that the Late-Fine Free issue be placed on a future City Council Agenda for discussion and possible action.

Thank you for your consideration.

Respectfully,  
Shiela Reyman  
Chairperson, Library Board